

Older Worker Programs

Senior Community Service Employment Program

The mission of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is to empower the economically disadvantaged person age 55 or older with job opportunities and training programs to enhance the participant's quality of life. SCSEP operates under Title V of the Older American's Act and provides subsidized part-time employment to workers age 55 and older who are at or below 125% of the federal poverty level. The purpose of SCSEP is to train workers and enable them to move to unsubsidized positions in the public and private sector. In addition, the SCSEP's goal is to improve the quality of life of older workers by moving them toward self-sufficiency.

The Aging and Adult Administration (A&AA) contracts with 45 non-profit and government agencies throughout the state to provide training for SCSEP participants. While placed in these agencies, SCSEP participants receive on-the-job training, and their current skills are honed as new skills are learned. With the supervision and assistance of SCSEP staff and staff of the contracted agencies, the participants gain skills, confidence and experience, which may lead to unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP works in partnership with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Administration, the Coalition to Promote Older Worker and Employer Resources (C-POW+ER), the One-Stop Career Centers and the 45 contracted agencies. SCSEP continues to work closely with the Department of Economic Security (DES) One-Stop Career Centers and is increasing the utilization of the Private Sector Initiative Program (PSIP). The PSIP offers small businesses a cost-free means of accessing the abilities of a growing pool of qualified, mature workers. This type of collaboration allows DES to leverage federal funding to better serve clients.

In SFY 2001, the average hourly wage of all older workers placed into unsubsidized employment from the SCSEP rose to \$8.78, and the total number of job placements was 135. SCSEP collaborates with Green Thumb, Inc., a national non-profit sponsor of SCSEP, to conduct the Search for Arizona's Oldest Outstanding Worker. The Oldest Outstanding Worker will represent Arizona at Green Thumb's Prime Time Award Initiative held in Washington, D.C. in September 2001, where the Nation's Oldest Outstanding Worker will be announced.

Table 1 - SCSEP Funding, Applicants Enrolled and Unsubsidized Placements for SFY 2000 and SFY 2001

Program Year	Funding	Total Applicants Enrolled	Number of Unsubsidized Placements
SFY 2000	\$ 2,886,316	417	163
SFY 2001	\$ 2,802,005	421	135

Workforce Investment Act -Older Worker Training Program

The partnership between SCSEP and the WIA has been instrumental in the training and placing of older workers into unsubsidized employment. SCSEP partners with One-Stop Career Centers to provide information and referral, case management, counseling, job training and supportive services to older workers. Employment and training services are available to eligible individuals who are 55 years of age or older, who meet the Department of Labor requirements and the Arizona income guidelines for the economically disadvantaged. The new WIA will continue to partner in providing training and employment opportunities to older workers. The new legislation under the WIA brings about a major transformation of workforce development systems by consolidating and streamlining over 70 federal employment and training programs into one system.

Foster Grandparent Program

Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) senior volunteers provide supportive services in health, education, welfare, or related settings to help alleviate physical, mental or emotional problems of children having special or exceptional needs. The FGP offers senior volunteers opportunities to serve as mentors, tutors and caregivers. Foster Grandparents provide 20 hours of weekly service through community organizations such as schools, hospitals, centers for abused or neglected youth, Head Start Programs and youth centers. DES sponsors the FGP throughout Arizona excluding the following counties: Apache, Coconino, Navajo and Yavapai. The FGP gives participants the opportunity to share a lifetime of experience with children having special needs. Funding for the FGP is provided through the Corporation for National Service/Senior Service Corps, a network of federally supported programs.